



**Problems in Worship**  
**Genesis 4:1-5**

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

How God sees our worship and how we see our worship may \_\_\_\_\_ greatly. God doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ all that people call worship. He asks that we \_\_\_\_\_ Him by how we worship. The Bible always teaches us the heart and the mind of God. It teaches us how to \_\_\_\_\_ Him. That's why we go to God's Word for the truth.

In worship, we express our thanks, our love, and our praise for God. Our Father has richly \_\_\_\_\_ us; and how could we not want to worship Him? What we \_\_\_\_\_ to God should honor and glorify Him. God wants worshipers who will worship Him in \_\_\_\_\_ and in \_\_\_\_\_. Sometimes people offer God worship that actually \_\_\_\_\_, worship that He will not \_\_\_\_\_. Some people are surprised that God would \_\_\_\_\_ their worship. They think God will be pleased no matter what we offer, but the Bible tells of several instances where God \_\_\_\_\_ the worship of His people.

If we should \_\_\_\_\_ that our worship is not acceptable to God, what should we do? Should we get \_\_\_\_\_? Should we stop worshiping the God of Heaven and start worshiping another god, or a god of our own \_\_\_\_\_? Should we close our \_\_\_\_\_ to the teaching of the Scripture and convince ourselves that it doesn't matter? Should we go and find someone who will \_\_\_\_\_ with us? Who will tell us what we \_\_\_\_\_ to hear?

Wouldn't it be better for us to \_\_\_\_\_ to God? Wouldn't it be \_\_\_\_\_ to take God's instructions in the Bible to heart and humble ourselves? If we're not pleasing to the Lord, we should humbly \_\_\_\_\_ our ways. Let's lovingly \_\_\_\_\_ so that we may honor the Lord. Today, we're going to examine the Scriptures. We're going to see how others have worshiped God in unacceptable ways and learn how we can \_\_\_\_\_ God in our worship.

**Our reading comes from the first book in the Bible, Genesis 4:1-5.**

Genesis 4 presents the very first \_\_\_\_\_ of worship in the Bible. The two brothers, Cain and Abel, both came before the Lord with their different \_\_\_\_\_. We don't know exactly what God \_\_\_\_\_ of them in their sacrifices. The Bible says, "So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground." We know that Cain tilled the ground and brought some of its \_\_\_\_\_. We do not know if his offering contained his best fruit or his first fruit. The text suggests that he was just discharging a \_\_\_\_\_.

"Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his \_\_\_\_\_ and of their fat portions." Abel brought the first and the best of his flock. "By faith Abel offered to God a \_\_\_\_\_ sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks" (Hebrews 11:4). Abel apparently showed a \_\_\_\_\_ in God that Cain did not show. Abel went out of his way to \_\_\_\_\_ God. As a result, God regarded Abel as righteous, because he offered an \_\_\_\_\_ sacrifice.

The next verse says, “And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard.” Did you catch that? God did not have regard for Cain or for his offering. There was something \_\_\_\_\_ in Cain’s faith. We learn from 1 John 3:12 that Cain’s deeds were \_\_\_\_\_, referring to his life, his offering, and his attitude. God made a distinction between an offering from a righteous and faithful man who wanted to please and an offering that was merely a discharge of \_\_\_\_\_.

When God did not accept Cain’s sacrifice, Cain got \_\_\_\_\_ and eventually killed his brother, Abel, over it. When people learn they have failed to live up to God’s expectations, rather than getting upset they should \_\_\_\_\_ and change their ways. No one likes to hear they have \_\_\_\_\_, but Cain’s life would have been so much better if he had changed his ways.

In Exodus 32, the Bible tells of the rebellious Israelites who gave up on the Lord and Moses and demanded \_\_\_\_\_. Aaron took their gold rings and made an idol in the form of a golden \_\_\_\_\_. They said the golden calf they fashioned was the god who \_\_\_\_\_ them out of Egypt. The next day they called a \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord. They sacrificed offerings; they sat down to eat and drink; and they rose up to \_\_\_\_\_. They behaved like the idolatrous \_\_\_\_\_ around them with drunken dancing filled with sensuality. Idolatrous worship often ended up in sexually immoral behavior. They rose up to play, and they thought playing was \_\_\_\_\_.

Ancient idolaters thought that their drinking and immoral dance was worship; and the Israelites said the calf that they made was the Lord. But they were \_\_\_\_\_ on both accounts, and the Lord grew angry at them. My friend, you cannot be on the Lord’s \_\_\_\_\_ and worship the way they did. You cannot serve a \_\_\_\_\_ God with impure behavior.

What they thought was worship was really a great \_\_\_\_\_. The Bible says, “Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire \_\_\_\_\_ as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were; and as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” (1 Corinthians 10:6-7). We must \_\_\_\_\_ that only acceptable worship to the true and living God is right.

In Isaiah the prophet’s day, the people thought they could worship God acceptably while they willfully \_\_\_\_\_ wicked lives. God wearied of their sacrifices and their feasts because of their iniquity. **Read what the Lord said in Isaiah 1:15-17.**

Because they chose to live ungodly lives, God would not hear their \_\_\_\_\_. I realize none of us can live a perfectly \_\_\_\_\_ life. You can’t and I can’t. God desires that when we do sin, however, that we \_\_\_\_\_ of our sins and humbly \_\_\_\_\_ for forgiveness. David, after his sin, wrote, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite \_\_\_\_\_, O God, You will not despise” (Psalm 51:17). But if we approach God unbroken and impenitent, how can we imagine that God will \_\_\_\_\_ us?

As we turn to the New Testament, we find other \_\_\_\_\_ with worship. The Lord Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, devotes eighteen verses to the problem of displaying righteousness to be \_\_\_\_\_ by others. Jesus said, “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no \_\_\_\_\_ from your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 6:1). He described this behavior as hypocrisy. Hypocrisy takes place when a person

\_\_\_\_\_ to be something that he doesn't intend to be. People were pretending to worship, but in God's eyes they were only showing off their righteousness.

The Lord applies this principle to three \_\_\_\_\_ of devotion: giving alms, praying, and fasting. The hypocrites would blow a trumpet before the people to call attention to their \_\_\_\_\_. They weren't \_\_\_\_\_ to God; they were showing off. The Lord teaches us, "Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in \_\_\_\_\_. And your Father who sees in secret will \_\_\_\_\_ you" (Matthew 6:3-4).

The people also proved themselves hypocrites in their \_\_\_\_\_. Hypocrites "love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be \_\_\_\_\_ by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their \_\_\_\_\_. But when you pray, you go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you" (Matthew 6:5-6).

Third, when the hypocrites \_\_\_\_\_, they put on gloomy faces and neglected their appearance, "so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I (Jesus) say to you, they have their reward in \_\_\_\_\_. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and you're Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you" (Matthew 6:16-18).

In Jesus' time, the Pharisees and others were \_\_\_\_\_ by the flesh to make a show out of their worship. I fear the same kind of thing is happening today. When people become enamored with Christian music stars, they have taken their \_\_\_\_\_ off of God. Even some preachers believe their calling is to \_\_\_\_\_ a health and wealth gospel. They promise blessings that have \_\_\_\_\_ to do with discipleship to Christ and everything to do with the crass materialism of our day. Other preachers believe their calling is to be stand-up comedians, using the pulpit for their \_\_\_\_\_. This is not the Lord's way.

Paul told Timothy, "I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to \_\_\_\_\_ the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great \_\_\_\_\_ and instruction" (2 Timothy 4:1-2). It is the Word, the gospel, that \_\_\_\_\_ (Romans 1:16). It is the Word of Christ that brings \_\_\_\_\_ (Romans 10:17). It is the Word that nourishes our \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Peter 2:2). We need the Bible to \_\_\_\_\_ strong and spiritually healthy.

Paul warned the elders of the church at Ephesus that savage \_\_\_\_\_ would come in among them, not sparing the flock. They'll speak twisted and perverse ideas that will draw \_\_\_\_\_ away from the Lord's way. This false teaching will \_\_\_\_\_ the church. What did Paul recommend? The Bible says, "And now I commend you to God and to the \_\_\_\_\_ of His grace, which is able to build *you* up and to give *you* the inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). To \_\_\_\_\_ Christ we must have the Word. Nothing else will do!

**Read Paul's warning to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:3-5.** Some churches today have forgotten the importance of the Word and have \_\_\_\_\_ preaching with comic routines, dramatic skits, or self-improvement rallies. We ask, "Where is the Lord in all of this?" Jesus didn't waste His time showing off or trying to exploit people with outlandish claims. The Lord said, "For the Son of Man

has come to \_\_\_\_\_ and to \_\_\_\_\_ that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). He preached a message of repentance, of love, and of salvation. Christianity is more than another \_\_\_\_\_ in the power of positive thinking. Some churches today \_\_\_\_\_ their worship services into traditional and contemporary in order to please everyone. Is pleasing people more important than the \_\_\_\_\_ of the congregation? Perhaps they’ve bought into a consumer mentality where what people \_\_\_\_\_ overrides what God wills. Is it God’s will that people’s worship desires are more important than what God requires? Is pleasing people more important than pleasing God?

The Lord Jesus prayed to the Father, “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, *are* in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:20-21). God wants His people to be \_\_\_\_\_, not separated in this group and that. If we cannot assemble with each other because we have different tastes in worship, we’ve become a house divided.

In some churches, women have taken a leadership \_\_\_\_\_ in worship that God does not permit. Several denominations have women pastors and preachers., “Therefore I want the men (males of full age and stature) in every place to \_\_\_\_\_, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension” (1 Timothy 2:8). Wherever the church meets, God expects \_\_\_\_\_ to take the lead.

**Read what God says in 1 Timothy 2:11-14.**

This is the Lord’s way, for men to lead; cultural change doesn’t change God’s \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord desires men to \_\_\_\_\_ the church. To support this, Paul appeals to creation and to the fall of Adam and Eve. Paul uses events from the beginning to show this is a fundamental \_\_\_\_\_ for all time and all cultures. It is God’s will that men lead in the worship of the church. Friends, let’s commit ourselves to the will of God.

Showing God love and respect in worship requires \_\_\_\_\_ to God to find out what He desires and requires. Cain lived his life on his \_\_\_\_\_ terms without faith or thought about God, and God had no regard for Cain or for His sacrifice. If we live on our terms and lose sight of God’s will, what makes us think that God will \_\_\_\_\_ our worship? God sees and knows all about us.

God expects our \_\_\_\_\_ to be right before Him if we’re to worship Him. God did not accept the worship of Israel in Isaiah’s time because they were living \_\_\_\_\_ lives. You can’t live like the devil six days a week and expect the Lord to accept you when you worship on the first day of the week. God expects His people to \_\_\_\_\_ their sins. You cannot be right with God until you’re washed in the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ.

Are you right with God? Perhaps today you need to establish a relationship with the Lord, because you want to worship and thank Him. To become His child you must place your faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God; you must repent of your sins and turn to the Lord; you must confess your faith before others; and you must be baptized in water for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38 and 22:16). When you’re baptized into Christ, you’re baptized into His death according to Romans 6:3. Baptism connects you with the blood of Christ and freedom from sin. Romans 6:4 tells us that baptism raises us up with Christ so that we may walk in newness of life. Today, is the best day to get right with God. We ask that you worship with one of the churches of Christ served by this station and let them know that you want to get right with God. You’ll be glad you did.